



9110-04-P

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Coast Guard

[Docket No. USCG-2012-0640]

Waterway Suitability Assessment for Expansion of Liquefied Gas Terminals; Houston and Texas City, TX

AGENCY: Coast Guard, DHS.

ACTION: Notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with Coast Guard regulations in 33 CFR 127.007, Oil Tanking North America has submitted a Letter of Intent and Waterway Suitability Assessment to the Coast Guard Captain of the Port, Sector Houston-Galveston regarding the company's proposed expansion of its Liquefied Hazardous Gas (LHG) facilities in Houston and Texas City, Texas, and increased LHG marine traffic in the associated waterway. The Coast Guard is notifying the public of this action to solicit public comments on the proposed increase in LHG marine traffic in Houston and Texas City, Texas.

DATES: Comments and related material must be received on or before [INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments identified by docket number USCG-2012-0640 using any one of the following methods:

(1) Federal eRulemaking Portal:

<http://www.regulations.gov>.

(2) Fax: 202-493-2251.

(3) Mail or Delivery: Docket Management Facility (M-30), U.S. Department of Transportation, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590-0001. Deliveries accepted between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The telephone number is 202-366-9329.

To avoid duplication, please use only one of these three methods. See the "Public Participation and Request for Comments" portion of the SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION section below for instructions on submitting comments.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: If you have questions on this notice, call or e-mail LCDR Xochitl Castaneda, U.S. Coast Guard; telephone 713-671-5164, e-mail Xochitl.L.Castaneda@uscg.mil. If you have questions on viewing or submitting material to the docket, call Renee V. Wright, Program Manager, Docket Operations, telephone 202-366-9826.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Public Participation and Request for Comments

We encourage you to submit comments and related material in response to this notice. All comments received will be posted

without change to <http://www.regulations.gov> and will include any personal information you have provided.

Submitting comments: If you submit a comment, please include the docket number for this notice (USCG-2012-0640), and provide a reason for each suggestion or recommendation. You may submit your comments and material online at <http://www.regulations.gov>, or by fax, mail, or hand delivery, but please use only one of these means. If you submit a comment online, it will be considered received by the Coast Guard when you successfully transmit the comment. If you fax, hand deliver, or mail your comment, it will be considered as having been received by the Coast Guard when it is received at the Docket Management Facility. We recommend that you include your name and a mailing address, an e-mail address, or a telephone number in the body of your document so that we can contact you if we have questions regarding your submission.

To submit your comment online, go to <http://www.regulations.gov>, type the docket number (USCG-2012-0640) in the "SEARCH" box and click "SEARCH." Click on "Submit a Comment" on the line associated with this notice.

If you submit your comments by mail or hand delivery, submit them in an unbound format, no larger than 8½ by 11 inches, suitable for copying and electronic filing. If you submit comments by mail and would like to know that they reached

the Facility, please enclose a stamped, self-addressed postcard or envelope. We will consider all comments and material received during the comment period.

Viewing comments: To view comments, go to <http://www.regulations.gov>, type the docket number (USCG-2012-0640) in the "SEARCH" box and click "SEARCH." Click on "Open Docket Folder" on the line associated with this rulemaking. You may also visit the Docket Management Facility in Room W12-140 on the ground floor of the Department of Transportation West Building, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

Privacy Act: Anyone can search the electronic form of comments received into any of our dockets by the name of the individual submitting the comment (or signing the comment, if submitted on behalf of an association, business, labor union, etc.). You may review a Privacy Act notice regarding our public dockets in the January 17, 2008, issue of the Federal Register (73 FR 3316).

Public meeting: We do not now plan to hold a public meeting, but you may submit a request for one, using one of the methods specified under ADDRESSES. Please explain why you believe a public meeting would be beneficial. If we determine that one would aid this rulemaking, we will hold one at a time

and place announced by a later notice in the Federal Register.

BASIS AND PURPOSE

Under 33 CFR 127.007(a), an owner or operator planning new construction to expand or modify marine terminal operations in an existing facility handling Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) or Liquefied Hazardous Gas (LHG), where the construction, expansion, or modification would result in an increase in the size and/or frequency of LNG or LHG marine traffic on the waterway associated with the facility, must submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) to the COTP of the zone in which the facility is located. Under 33 CFR 127.007(e), an owner or operator planning such an expansion must also file or update a Waterway Suitability Assessment (WSA) that addresses the proposed increase in LNG or LHG marine traffic in the associated waterway. Oil Tanking North America submitted an LOI on May 12, 2011 and a WSA on April 24, 2012 regarding the company's proposed expansion of its LHG facilities in Houston and Texas City, Texas.

Under 33 CFR 127.009, after receiving an LOI, the COTP issues a Letter of Recommendation (LOR) as to the suitability of the waterway for LNG or LHG marine traffic to the appropriate jurisdictional authorities. The LOR is based on a series of factors outlined in 33 CFR 127.009 that relate to the physical nature of the affected waterway and issues of safety and

security associated with LNG or LHG marine traffic on the affected waterway.

The purpose of this notice is to solicit public comments on the proposed increase in LHG marine traffic in Houston and Texas City, Texas. The Coast Guard believes that input from the public may be useful to the COTP with respect to development of the LOR. Additionally, the Coast Guard tasked the Area Maritime Security Committee, Houston-Galveston, Texas, with forming a subcommittee comprised of affected port users and stakeholders, including appropriate members of the Harbor Safety Committee. The goal of the subcommittee will be to gather information to help the COTP assess the suitability of the associated waterway for increased LHG marine traffic as it relates to navigational safety and security.

On January 24, 2011, the Coast Guard published Navigation and Vessel Inspection Circular (NVIC) 01-2011, "Guidance Related to Waterfront Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Facilities." NVIC 01-2011 provides guidance for owners and operators seeking approval to build and operate LNG facilities. While NVIC 01-2011 is specific to LNG, it provides useful process information and guidance for owners and operators seeking approval to build and operate LHG facilities as well. The Coast Guard will refer to NVIC 01-2011 for process information and guidance in evaluating Oil Tanking North America's WSA. A copy of NVIC 01-2011 is

available for viewing in the public docket for this notice and also on the Coast Guard's website at

<http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg5/nvic/2010s.asp>.

This notice is issued under the authority of 33 U.S.C. §§ 1223-1225, Department of Homeland Security Delegation Number 0170.1(70), 33 CFR 127.009, and 33 CFR 103.205.

Dated: October 19, 2012

J. H. Whitehead
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard
Captain of the Port Houston-Galveston, Texas.

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